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METHODS AND MATERIALS
FOR STUDYING EARLY ADOPTERS
WHO OWN NONINDUSTRIAL PRIVATE FORESTLAND

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METHODS AND MATERIALS
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WHO OWN NONINDUSTRIAL PRIVATE FORESTLAND

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I. STUDY METHODS

Introduction

This bulletin contains a description of the methods and the interview instrument used to study 64 nonindustrial private forestland owners in eight rural counties of South Carolina. The study sought an in-depth understanding of one type of landowner --early adopters. Early adopters form a key audience because they readily try new ideas, frequently adopt innovations, and have potential for influencing others. Briefly described below are methods used to select counties, identify early adopters, select participants, and conduct personal interviews to collect data. The interview instrument follows. Articles reporting results of the data analysis are listed in the "Suggested Reading" list (Haymond 1986, 1988a, b, and c).

Selection of counties

Personal interviews were held with the Cooperative Extension Service county agents in each of the 18 Piedmont counties of South Carolina to discuss the proposed research, determine the propensity of the agents for cooperating, and learn their impressions of the likelihood of identifying county opinion leaders (early adopters) who would be cooperative. Because of the desirability of conducting the research in similar counties, sample counties were identified from a composite ranking based on three factors: (1) income from forest products as a percentage of total land-derived income in the county, (2) the percentage of county commercial forestland owned by private forestland owners, and (3) the number of acres of private forestland in each county. The eight counties were selected based on four considerations:

1. The counties were among the top ranked according to a composite ranking scheme based on the above factors.
2. The percentage of national forestland within the county was low (less than 20% of the total commercial forestland).
3. No major urban areas occurred within the county.
4. The county agent was willing to cooperate and relatively enthusiastic about the project.

Identifying early adopters

Early adopters were identified by requesting lists from three informants in each county who were familiar with the owners of forestland: the County Extension Service agent, the South Carolina Forestry Commission forester, and one other local resource person. The "Definition and Form for Listing Early Adopters Who Own Forestland" provided uniform instructions. A primary concern was to include a broad spectrum of the early adopter population in the study area. The informants were asked to consider all types of people (race, age, sex, income, etc.) who owned some forestland and could be characterized as early adopters. The three independently prepared lists were consolidated in each study county.

Selection of participants

Early adopters to be interviewed were selected according to the following criteria:

1. All early adopters named by more than one of the three informants were asked to participate in the study (except those eliminated by item 2).
2. The primary informant (county agent or commission forester) was consulted regarding the likelihood of the nominees to be willing to participate in the study. Professional foresters, landowners employing full-time professional foresters, additional members of the same family owning forestland mutually, and those persons judged as likely to be uncooperative or unknown by the primary informant were deleted from the lists. The remaining names were ranked by the primary informant in each county and participants were chosen in order.
3. A minimum of seven and a maximum of 15 early adopters were interviewed in each of the eight counties.

Conducting interviews

All participants were interviewed by the principal investigator. Each interview was tape recorded and lasted about two hours. Short answers to specific questions were recorded on forms during the interview. Other responses were transferred from the tape to the questionnaire.

Interviews were held wherever the early adopter chose--in homes, yards, offices, stores, or farm buildings. The need for recording the sessions was explained and in all cases the interviewees agreed. The recorder was placed out of the interviewees' direct line of sight and usually appeared to be forgotten by the time some introductory personal conversation had taken place.

Responses to questions were freely given with only two exceptions. Three respondents did not reveal their income level and some were hesitant to discuss the amount of property they owned.

Most respondents were flattered that they had been included in the study and talked quite openly. Wives often took part in the conversation and in some cases children were present. Refreshments were frequently served. With few exceptions, a relaxed atmosphere prevailed and interruptions were minimal. In those cases where interruptions did occur (e.g., an unexpected visitor in the home, a customer arriving in the store, an employee seeking advice), the respondent was eager to resume the interview and had maintained his level of concentration on the subject being discussed.

[illegible]

III. INFORMATION TO BE PROVIDED TO LANDOWNERS WHEN REQUESTING THEIR PARTICIPATION

The local informants and principal investigator gave this information to landowners when requesting their participation in the study.

Reasons for the study

This study is being done to gain a better understanding of private forestland owners. Wood, as well as quality water, wildlife, aesthetics, and recreation are all benefits from owning private forestland. What we learn from this study will give foresters a better understanding of the kinds of information forestland owners would like to have.

Sponsor

The Department of Forestry, Clemson University, is sponsoring this study. Jacqueline L. Haymond, Instructor, is the principal investigator.

Methods

You will be personally interviewed by the principal investigator, Jackie Haymond. In order to save time, the interview will be tape-recorded, with your permission. Some answers will be written. Your name will not appear on the tapes or the written forms. A code number will be used. The code numbers will not be available to anyone except the principal investigator. Materials will never be identified by name without your written permission.

Subject matter

We will talk about why you own forestland and how you use it, your thoughts about trying new ideas for managing your forestland, where you learn about managing your land, your ideas about wildlife and other benefits of owning forestland, and some personal information.

Your answers

You may refuse to answer a question if you wish. But, I am interviewing only a few people and the results of the study will be much more meaningful if all the questions are answered.

We know that your time is valuable and we appreciate your willingness to participate in this study. Your ideas are very important if we are to do a good job of providing the kind of forest management information you and other landowners want.

Thank you for agreeing to help us.

IV. INTERVIEW FORM FOR USE WITH EARLY ADOPTERS WHO OWN NONINDUSTRIAL PRIVATE FOREST LAND

The principal investigator used this form to guide the conversational interview. Although the interviews were tape-recorded, many responses were recorded on this form.

A. GENERAL FORESTLAND OWNERSHIP INFORMATION

The following questions determined forest characteristics and general thoughts on management.

Rural prop. No. acres	Location	Forestland No. acres	Forest type No. acres	Yr. ac- quired	Yr. of last sale
_____	_____	_____	planted pine _____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	natural pine _____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	hardwoods _____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	mixed p-hwd _____	_____	_____

1. Do you live on or near your forestland?
2. How long have you lived there?
3. How long have you been managing your forestland?
4. How did you acquire your forestland?
5. Would you like to have more of the land you now own in forest?
6. Would you rather have more in pines, hardwoods, or a mixture of pines and hardwoods?
7. When you bought forestland, did you make a sale within 10 years?
8. Have you bought forestland without expecting income from the trees: that is, just because you wanted the land? If so, why did you buy it?
9. What have you used money from timber sales for in the past?
10. What do you plan to use future income from your forestland for?
11. Who is an opinion leader in your community?

(A...cont.)

12. Who do you think is doing a good job managing his forest-land?
13. Would you ask his advice about your own forest?
14. Have you tried a forest practice on your land that you saw on his?
15. Would you say:

_____ I'm glad I didn't invest money in improving my forestland,

_____ I wish I had invested some money or more money in improving my forestland,

_____ I think I've spent about the right amount.
16. Can you think of some reasons for cutting trees other than selling them? What reasons?
17. Do you hunt? Why? Where? What kind of animals?
18. Who in your community has a good place to hunt?
19. Would you ask his advice before trying to improve your forest for wildlife?
20. Who else would you ask?
21. Have you ever leased hunting or other rights on your land? Would you do it again? Why, or why not?
22. Have you ever posted "No Hunting" or "No Trespassing" signs on your forestland? Why, or why not? If yes, did they work?

B. REASONS FOR OWNING FORESTLAND

The interviewer read the following statements to the participant who indicated whether or not they applied to him.

1. Some reasons why I like to own forestland are: (Please check all that apply.)

- _____ It is beautiful.
- _____ I'm proud of it.
- _____ Land means wealth.
- _____ I can use it to borrow money from the bank.
- _____ Hunting and/or fishing are my hobbies, and I like to do it on my own land.
- _____ It protects the environment (erosion, streambanks, etc.).
- _____ I just like to walk around in the woods once in a while.
- _____ Owning forestland is like having money in the bank.
- _____ Trees are the only thing that will grow there.
- _____ I can't make any money farming that land any more.
- _____ I'm saving it for my children.
- _____ I needed to invest some money and forestland is a good investment.
- _____ It's a good tax shelter.
- _____ I am speculating that forestland value will increase in years to come.
- _____ Birds and animals live in my forest.
- _____ My family has always owned it.
- _____ We cut firewood from our forest.
- _____ My wife will need the income after I'm gone.
- _____ Income from timber sales will help finance my retirement.
- _____ Within the next 10 years, I plan to start a new business with the money from a timber sale.
- _____ I'd like to expand my present business.
- _____ It is satisfying just to own it.

(B...cont.)

_____ My other income is just not enough to maintain our standard of living.

_____ I use it for my own personal recreation.

_____ We live on the property and the woods help make it a nice place to live.

_____ Timber production is my main goal.

_____ Wildlife is important to us.

2. Now, please tell me the most important reason or reasons you like to own forestland.

C. FOREST PRODUCTS

The interviewer asked the respondent about specific products received from the forestland with the following question, and recorded the answers below.

1. Now I would like to ask you about some of the products that may have come from your forestland:

Pulpwood: _____ pine _____ hardwood

Firewood: _____ sale _____ personal use

Sawtimber: _____ pine _____ hardwood

_____ sale _____ personal use

Christmas trees:

_____ sale _____ personal use

Fenceposts: _____ (yes/no) species: _____

Game birds or animals:

_____ turkey _____ rabbits _____ coon

_____ fish _____ quail _____ other

Honeybees: _____ (yes/no)

D. FOREST ACTIVITIES

The following questions assessed recreational use and the adoption of forest management practices.

1. Some things which have been done on my forestland are:

- _____ wildlife food plots have been planted
- _____ fire lines have been plowed
- _____ a management plan has been written by a forester
- _____ firewood has been cut to improve the remaining stand of trees
- _____ firewood has been cut without considering the remaining trees
- _____ controlled burning

2. We have also:

- _____ removed trash
- _____ had a picnic
- _____ swam in the creek or pond
- _____ cut our own Christmas tree
- _____ cut trees or boards for our use
- _____ built or improved roads
- _____ built bridges
- _____ cleared trails for walking or riding
- _____ posted "No Trespassing" or "No Hunting" signs
- _____ cut out vines, briars, and bushes for better access
- _____ personally done some of the work

(D...cont.)

3. When I sold timber off my land, I insisted:

- ☐ on having more than one bid for the wood before selling
- ☐ on leaving trees 6" in diameter and smaller, to replace the cut trees
- ☐ that no pine trees would be cut that were not big enough for sawtimber
- ☐ that the logger remove cull trees
- ☐ that, after a clearcut, the remaining trash trees would be removed to encourage good natural regeneration

4. Pines have been planted on my land to:

- ☐ stop or prevent erosion
- ☐ replace harvested pines
- ☐ replace pasture
- ☐ replace "green junk" hardwoods
- ☐ replace uneconomical farmland
- ☐ improve my hardwood or mixed pine-hardwood forestland

5. Site preparation has been done on my land:
(circle treatment type)

- ☐ prior to harvest
(chemical, mechanical, burning)
- ☐ following harvest
(chemical, mechanical, burning)

6. Cruising timber was done on my land:

- ☐ for inventory information only, not sale
- ☐ just prior to sale by someone other than buyer
- ☐ just prior to sale by buyer
- ☐ other: _____

(D...cont.)

7. Trees have been marked on my land to be:

- ☐ left for wildlife dens, nesting, or roosting
- ☐ harvested
- ☐ left for seed trees
- ☐ left to provide acorns for wildlife food
- ☐ cut for firewood
- ☐ used to mark boundary lines
- ☐ other

8. My pine stands have been thinned:

- ☐ precommercially, when it cost me money
- ☐ commercially, when I made money
- ☐ prior to a seed tree cut to improve seed production
- ☐ while doing improvement cuts

9. Herbicides have been used on my forestland:

- ☐ aerially applied
- ☐ ground applied
- ☐ for releasing pines from overtopping hardwood trees or brush
- ☐ for site preparation prior to planting
- ☐ for controlling undesirable vegetation
- ☐ other: _____

10. To improve my forestland, timber stand improvement has been done: (*circle stand types*)

- ☐ without income from pulpwood or firewood
(pines, hardwoods, mixed stands)
- ☐ with income from pulpwood or firewood
(pines, hardwoods, mixed stands)
- ☐ while cutting firewood for personal use
(pines, hardwoods, mixed stands)

E. SOURCES OF FORESTRY INFORMATION

Participants were asked to indicate which information sources they used, then to rate the quality of the sources that they used, and finally to indicate the best of the good information sources. Answers were recorded on the form below.

Source (check columns)	No. times used			Evaluation		
	(0)	(1-2)	(≥3)	Good	Med.	Poor
Newspapers (general)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Forestry magazines	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Farm magazines	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Extension bulletins	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Forestry organizations	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Radio	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Television	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Banks/credit institutions	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Logger/Buyer	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Paid consultant	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
County forester	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Industry forester	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Clemson professors	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
County agent	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
SCS or ASCS	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Friends or neighbors	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other forest landowners	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Family traditions	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

F. DETERMINING THE ACCEPTABILITY OF NEW FOREST PRACTICES

The following questions sought insight into the factors participants considered when making adoption decisions.

1. When you consider trying any new forestry activity on your land, you will probably think of many things before you try it: How much does it cost?...Will it be worth it?...How will it look?...Can I get someone to do the work?...etc. I would like to talk about some of them with you and get your ideas. Please rank the following factors as "important," "somewhat important," or "not important" to you:

- _____ How much the practice will cost.
- _____ When it needs to be done, money is available from a recent timber sale.
- _____ In less than 10 years you can expect some financial return.
- _____ Government cost-sharing of funds may be available.
- _____ The value of your land will be increased.
- _____ Some tax relief is gained.
- _____ It makes your forestland look better.
- _____ The wildlife environment will be better.
- _____ It will improve recreation in your forest.
- _____ You can supervise or do the work yourself.
- _____ Equipment is available for your use.
- _____ Private contractors are available to do the work.
- _____ Professional advice is available.
- _____ Private consultants are available to do the work.
- _____ County foresters paid by the state can do the work.
- _____ Foresters employed by the local paper company will do the work.
- _____ Your neighbors use this new practice.
- _____ Your father or other family members did this on their land.
- _____ You have seen someone else try it recently.

(F...cont.)

_____ You have tried it on your own land before.

_____ Your children will learn from it.

2. Please rank the following five factors from the highest (1) to the lowest (5) in importance when considering a new forestry activity.

_____ increased timber growth in your forest

_____ how much your forest will be improved for other uses

_____ the cost

_____ a quick return on your investment

_____ how easily it can be done

G. EARLY ADOPTER SELF-JUDGMENT TEST

The following questions determined if the participants could be categorized "early adopters" and served as a cross-reference to the selection procedure.

There are no right or wrong answers to the following questions.

1. After hearing of a completely new idea, I am usually:

_____ the first to try it

_____ among the first to try it

_____ will try it about the same time most other people do

_____ will try it after many other people do

_____ will try it after most other people do

(G...cont.)

2. In addition, after hearing of a completely new idea, I am usually:

_____ eager to try it as a scientific investigation
_____ interested in trying it as soon as I have observed
a successful demonstration
_____ conservative in my approach
_____ skeptical and probably won't try it
_____ very cautious and unlikely to try it

3. Compared to my friends and neighbors, my level of education is:

_____ very high
_____ above average
_____ average
_____ slightly below average
_____ lower than most

4. My participation in organizations has included:

_____ officer/committee member in state or national
groups involving travel
_____ officer/committee member in community groups
_____ member of many community groups
_____ going to meetings in the community once in a while
_____ no groups other than church-related
_____ other: _____

(G...cont.)

5. My family is economically and socially:

- _____ better off than almost anybody else's in our area
- _____ better off than most families in our area
- _____ about the same level as most
- _____ not quite so well off as most
- _____ doing the best we can with what we have

6. Our rural property acreage (farm and forestland) is:

- _____ the largest in our community
- _____ among the largest
- _____ about the same size as most
- _____ slightly smaller than others
- _____ much smaller than others

7. Valuable information about using new ideas in managing our rural property comes primarily from:

- _____ Clemson professors or other scientific sources
- _____ county agents and Extension bulletins
- _____ magazines, friends and neighbors
- _____ friends and neighbors
- _____ friends, neighbors and radio farm shows
- _____ other: _____

H. WILDLIFE APPRECIATION

The following questions were used to gather information about a variety of wildlife appreciation and management activities.

1. Things we have done to enjoy wild plants and animals on our property include:

- _____ appreciated autumn leaf colors
- _____ hunted game animals
- _____ always prevented hunting
- _____ prevented hunting of certain animals
- What kind(s) _____
- _____ photographed wildlife
- What kind(s) _____
- _____ looked at birds and animals
- _____ observed flowers
- _____ watched for young birds or animals to be born
- _____ watched migratory birds arriving or leaving
- _____ cared for an injured bird or animal
- _____ took a walk to look for signs of wild animals.
- _____ picked wildflowers, berries, or medicinal plants
- _____ followed tracks in hopes of seeing a wild animal
- _____ provided food for wild animals
- _____ provided houses for wild animals
- _____ provided birdbaths
- _____ read about wildlife
- _____ watched wildlife television shows
- _____ cut trees in a manner specifically designed to enhance wildlife, such as leaving snags
- _____ cleared out trees and brush to provide natural feeding areas
- _____ cultivated and planted openings

(H...cont.)

_____ left some mixed pine-hardwood areas partly because
wildlife prefers that kind of forest

_____ other: _____

2. To me, wild animals and plants are important for:

	Very	Somewhat	Not very
food (animals)	_____	_____	_____
food (plants)	_____	_____	_____
clothing (animals)	_____	_____	_____
medicinal purposes	_____	_____	_____
observation and appreciation of animals	_____	_____	_____
observation and appreciation of plants	_____	_____	_____
a better quality of life	_____	_____	_____
increasing the monetary value of my land	_____	_____	_____
hunting	_____	_____	_____
photography	_____	_____	_____
preserving a way of life	_____	_____	_____
providing a better environment for future generations	_____	_____	_____
other:	_____	_____	_____

3. If wildlife is important, how can we make sure there is a
healthy environment for plants and animals in our country?

(H...cont.)

4. I have gotten information about wildlife from these sources
(Check all sources used)

Evaluation:

Good Medium Poor

on my own, just being out-of-
doors

relatives

friends and neighbors

magazines and newspapers

Which ones? _____

books

television

when I attended school

when I was a scout

when I was in 4-H

wildlife organizations and clubs

Extension Service bulletins

county agents

SCS/ASCS

SC Wildlife and Marine Resources
Department

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

other:

5. Please rank the "good" information sources (above) beginning
with the number "1" for the most important.

(H...cont.)

6. On your forestland:

	Have been seen or heard	Have been collected (alive)	Have been hunted by Fam. Frds. Cust.	Recently have seen More Fewer	I'd like to see More Fewer
bats	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
beaver	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
bobcats	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
butterflies	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
crows	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
deer	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
doves	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
ducks	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
fish	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
foxes	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
geese	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
hawks	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
honeybees	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
hornets	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
oppossum	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
owls	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
quail	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
rabbits	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
raccoons	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
skunks	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
songbirds	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
squirrels	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
turkeys	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
woodpeckers	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
yellow-jackets	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

I. NIPF PERSONAL, CULTURAL, AND INSTITUTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

The following questions assessed landowner characteristics for comparison purposes.

1. Your age: _____ <40 _____ 40-50 _____ 50-60 _____ >60
 2. Gender: _____ M _____ F
 3. Ethnic background: _____ Scotch-Irish _____ German
_____ Dutch _____ British _____ Other
 4. Childhood home: _____ Farm _____ Town (<10,000) _____ City
What state: _____
 5. Religious affiliation: _____
 6. Political orientation: _____ Conservative _____ Liberal
_____ Middle-of-the-road
 7. Occupation: _____ Professional _____ Academic
_____ Government _____ Business _____ Self-employed
_____ Housewife _____ Farmer _____ Retired (if retired,
indicate previous occupation and retired)
 8. Marital status: _____ Single _____ Married
 9. Number of children: _____ Boys _____ Girls
 10. Social and economic status:
_____ Lower class
_____ Middle class (____ lower, ____ middle, or ____ upper middle)
_____ Upper class
 11. Education: _____ Number of years
_____ High school diploma _____ College degree
_____ Other: (such as night school, correspondence courses,
and special interest skills)
-

13. Music:

Favorite kind(s) _____

Instrument(s) played _____

14. Books:

Currently reading _____

Just read _____

Plan to read _____

15. Magazines:

Read regularly _____

16. Radio:

Kinds of programs _____

17. Television:

Favorite programs _____

18. Group membership:

Social groups (*church, bridge, dance, scouts, etc.*)

Hobby and special interest (*Ducks Unlimited, Audubon, etc.*)

Civic and government (*Lions, Rotary, city council, etc.*)

(I...cont.)

Professional organizations (your profession)

Farm organizations

Forestry organizations

19. Participation in organizations:

_____ Local level _____ State level _____ National level
_____ Officer or committee member

20. Leisure time activities:

Favorite pastime(s) _____

21. When did you take your last vacation? _____ date

22. What kind of vacation was it? _____ Beach _____ Mountains
_____ Camping _____ Hunting _____ Fishing _____ Travel
_____ Stayed home

23. What kind of vacation would you prefer?

24. Would you prefer more leisure time even if it meant less income?

_____ Yes _____ No

(I...cont.)

25. In which range does your income fall?

(A card listing five categories was handed to the participant who responded with the letter corresponding to his income level)

A. _____ <20,000

B. _____ 20,000-30,000

C. _____ 30,000-40,000

D. _____ 40,000-50,000

E. _____ >50,000

26. Could your family get by on less income?

_____ Yes _____ No

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